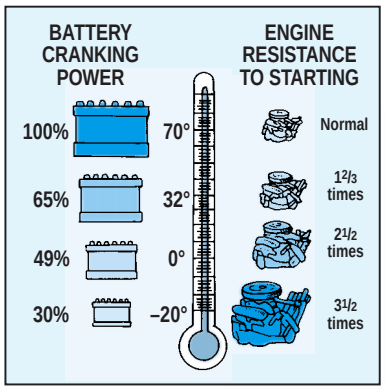
Keep Batteries Strong for the Cold

If you don't know the condition of your vehicle's batteries, you could find yourself stranded in the cold this winter.

A weak battery has little chance of surviving winter because even a good battery suffers in the cold. Note that…

❄ A fully-charged battery loses a third of its cranking power at 32°F, compared to its cranking power at 70°F.



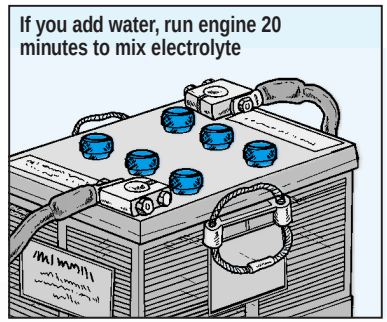
At 0°F, it has less than half its power.

At –20°F, it has only 30 percent of its power.

Here's how to determine if your batteries are strong enough for the cold.

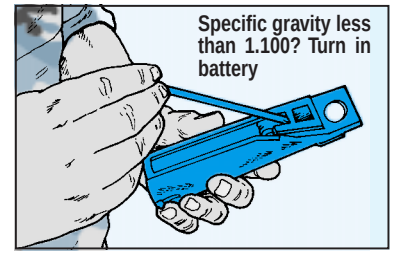
❄ Make sure you've got a copy of TM 9-6140-200-14, the battery bible.

❄ If you've just added distilled water to a battery, start the vehicle's engine and let it run for at least 20 minutes. That gives the charging system a chance to mix the water and electrolyte. If you don't let 'em mix, you'll be testing water only. This mixing also helps keep water from freezing, which prevents cracked battery cases.

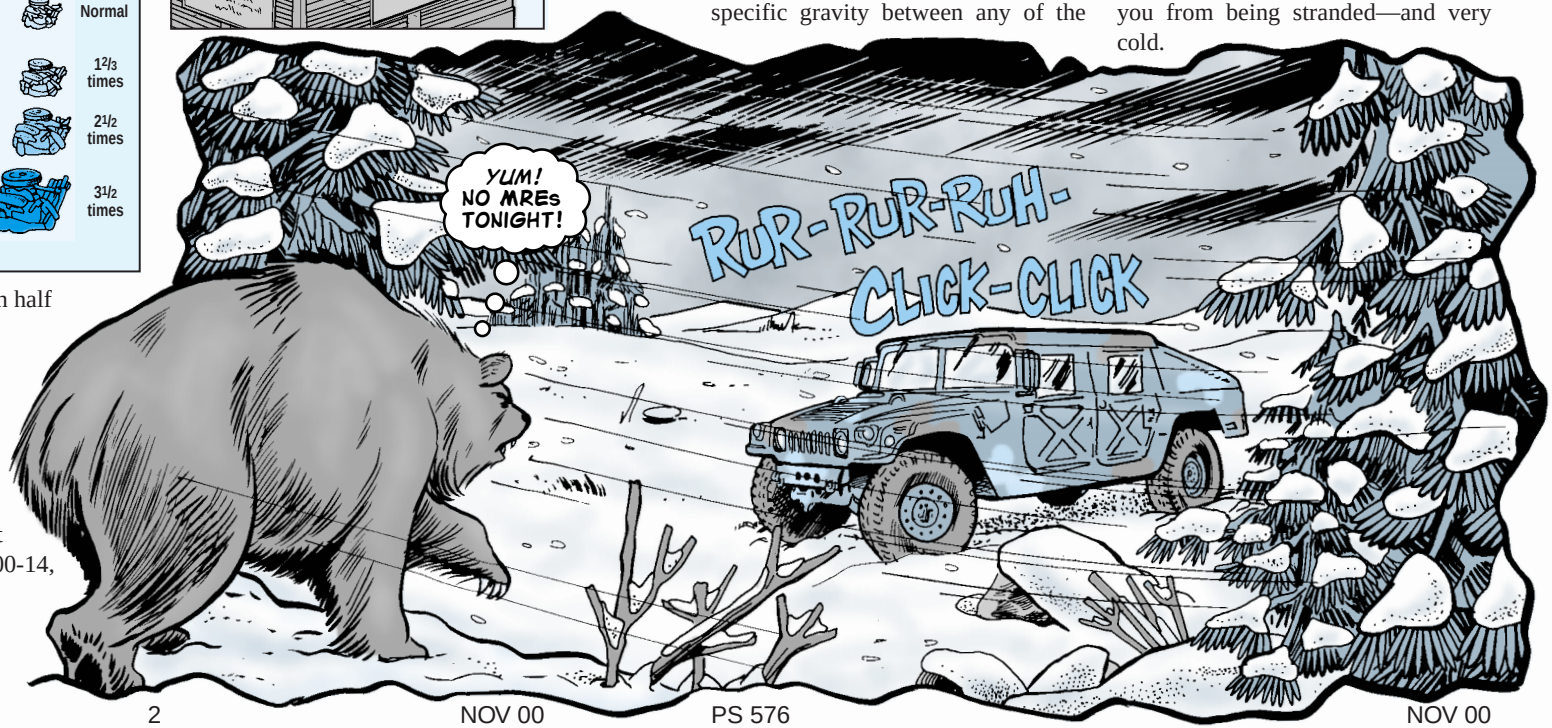


❄ Eyeball Chap 3 of the battery pub for testing procedures. That means using the optical battery/antifreeze tester in the Common shop sets.

❄ Using the info in Para 3-6 of the TM, test the battery's specific gravity. If any cell's specific gravity is less than 1.100, turn in the battery. It'll freeze in cold weather. If there is a difference in specific gravity between any of the cells of more than 0.025, turn in the battery, too.



Keep in mind that it's a good idea to run the specific gravity test on a "new" battery from supply, too. It could save you from being stranded—and very cold.



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